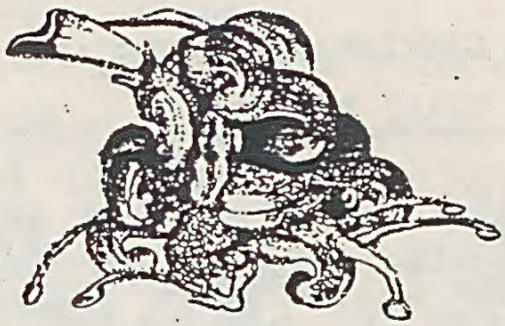
CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

80

June '83

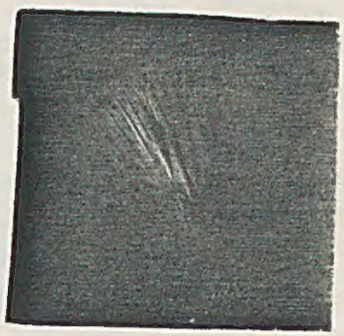


Grevillea alpina
'Gold fields Grevillea'

JUNIOR NATS

Last month a Bushwalking Club was started at the High School. It's proving to be more in the nature of a nature study club, with the children keen to find things and share their finds with others. One day they collected a number of different fungi, made spore prints - two of which are shown - and looked at the tiny insects in the mushrooms under the stereomicroscopes - all of which have been recorded in a Field Book.

Convex - flat orange cap "cocoa-brown" gills. Spores brown



Very concave, shiny, fawn cap pale fawn gills white spores.

REPORTS FROM THE LAST MEETING.

Terry Collins reported a very large flock of fifty or so Wattle birds which were on his property. They only stopped for a very short while before moving on -much to his relief!
A report we were all very glad to hear was from Gordon Grant who told us that they have seen numbers of drought stricken trees sprouting again, including some apparantly quite dead stringy barks.
Both George Broadway and Kate Turner reported sighting Yellow-tufted honeyeaters in the town area.
Geoff Sitch reported sighting Black-headed sitellas well out of their normal range, which is well to the west of here, out at Muckleford.

THE CASTLEMAINE LANDSCAPE..... a series by E.P.

BIG HILL, BENDIGO ... the Calder Highway.

A few months ago we had a view of Big Hill, taken from the southern (or granite side). This time the view is from the Bendigo side.

Unlike the granite area, the northern side is timbered. That the north slope is still with forest is due no doubt to the poor and shallow soil on this side. The rock has resisted erosion, and much of the soil produced has eroded away. This has made clearing uneconomic.

It is interesting to note how many of the trees are leaning over the roadway, caused by the trees growing towards the light.

****

Have you noticed how thickly Cape Weed is growing along the edges of roads and streets. It seems to be the most common weed in many areas where it was almost completely absent before.

Perhaps 1983 will be the year of the Daisy Chain !

BANKSIAS OF THE EAST COAST

By Terry Collins

Cont. from may issue

B. ROBUR.

Grows mainly in low boggy swamps along the coastal or or near coastal areas of N.S.W. and Queensland. Height is about 1 - 2m with large leaves up to 30cm long. The flowers mainly are of dark bottle green. The spike turns a rusty brown for many months until the dead flowers fall away leaving the seed capsules.

B. MARGINATA.

This banksia is the most southermost extending through S.A. N.S.W. Victoria across the Bass Strait islands to Tasmania. It is equally at home in the Australian Alps as the wind swept islands. Height can vary with the habitat from 1½m to 8m. The leaves are silvery underneath and the flower spikes are small (8cm) yellow in colour. The seeds are shed usually as they ripen.

B. CANEI.

More commonly known as the Mountain banksia. It is a native of Victoria growing as a small shrub 1 - 2m High and up to 1m wide. The leaves are stiff and sharply serrated with blue - green to yellow flowers.

Coupling these banksias with the forty native to Western Australia makes a tremendous range of shrubs and trees all with their own spectacular flowers of various colours. It is a pity that many more are not seen in suburban gardens in place of the exotic shrubs as given a climate and soil suitable to their type, they are easily grown and hardy apart from the display when flowering they are a great source of honey for birds and bees; bringing many new honeyeaters into your garden from the bush. So if you have a spare spot on the block try one suitable to Castlemaine that will fit into your garden.

From the Bird Observers Club is a request for information re the effect recent bushfires have had on resident and visiting birds (and other wildlife) both for the bushfire areas and adjacent areas which may have recieved fleeing creatures. Details are available on the table at the meeting or from myself. Ed.

CAMPOUT AT MILDURA

E.P.

Some of the advantages of attending the campouts is that one meets old friends, and sees things and places that would be impossible for a private visitor. The campout at Mildura during May was no exception.

We left for Mildura on Friday morning. Some highlights of the trip were being bogged at Derang
a flock of hundreds of Banded Stilts at Swan Hill
a Big Egret and Little Egret side by side at Lake Boga
Whiskered Terns and Caspian Terns at Lake Boga
many fine views of Pelicans
both Royal and White Spoonbills near Swan Hill

On Saturday we were taken to the Meridian Lakes at Merbein South. Here, salt water from irrigation is being stored. Although salt is not wanted by farmers, it is apparently appreciated by water birds. Most of the lakes can easily be seen from the road, and we saw dozens of birds. Highlight was a flock of Stints-a completely new record for me.

The break in the drought had not extended to Mildura, and at times the horizon was obscured by blowing sand, and we drove through sand drifts over the road.
On the way to the lakes we were shown a stand of Acacia melvilli-again a new plant for most on the excursion.
It was interesting too, to see Tree Tobacco growing along the sand dunes.

On Sunday we drove to Hattah via Paradoc. Once again there was plenty of evidence of blowing sand and accumulating salt.
Stands of the very rare Casuarina obtusa were almost entirely killed by salt from nearby farms.
Probably the Major Mitchell Cockatoos were th most spectacular bird seen. Hattah would obviously be a marvellous place to spend a week in spring, accompanied by a pair of binoculars.

At Mildura.we had time to look for birds along the River. Birds seen included Pied Butcherbirds.Fork-tailed Kites anf Varied Sitellas

The Mildura club has some excellent photographers, and they gave an excellent account of their district at the evening meeting.
Mildura would be a most intersting place in which to live, with so many interesting and varied habitats, ranging from river and lake, to swamp, dry desert, sand hill and irrigation areas.

Cliff Beauglehole's next books are well underway.
This year we can expect to see the publication of the plants of the Melbourne Study area and also the Ballarat Sudy area.
W
The next campouts will be at Kiata in the Little Desert, hosted by the Horsham Field Naturalists Club, and then at Bacchus Marsh to be hosted by the Ballarat Club. Both should be well worth attending.

Castlemaine has organised two campouts, both in autumn. Should we think about holding a third, but this time in spring? We have so many Interesting places to which we could go!

THE FLORA OF AUSTRALIA

E.P.

The only complete Flora for Australia was "Flora Austaliensis", that was printed last century. The lack of an up-to-date flora is now being remedied by the Bureau of Flora and Fauna, Canberra.

Bentham's "Flora Austaliensis" was made up of seven volumes. Volume 1 was published in 1863 and the last volume 15 years later in 1878.

It is planned that the new Flora of Australia will take at least 49 volumes! It will take 20 years or more to complete, but, unlike the Flora Australienis, will have contibutions from many individuals.

So far, volumes 1,8 and 29 have been published.
If the average price is only $30 per volume, this means that the entire set will cost only $1470.

We are lucky, I suppose, that we have 20 years to pay!

Some More Barkers Creek Birds.

This note was dropped in my letter box a week or two ago.

'For the record - during April/May we have had on the block a Barn Owl, a pair of Brush Bronzewing Pigeons and a Scaley Thrush..It is only the second time we have seen the latter, the other time was up in the pines 2 or 3 years ago. We hope to have slides of it this time, however its camoflage is so perfect when feeding amongst the leaf=litter it is very hard to see until it moves.

Wyn Palmer

Mugging.

So that we have some drinking vessels a request is being made that each member bring a mug for him/herself and a visitor. They don't have to be fancy or new. There is a place to store them at the school.

V. F. N. C. A.

VICTORIAN FIELD NATURALISTS CLUBS ASSOCIATION.

PLEASE PASS THIS MESSAGE ON TO ALL OF YOUR CLUB MEMBERS
AND DON'T MISS THE :-

SPRINGTIME GET-TOGETHER OF ALL CLUBS

OCTOBER 8TH & 9TH (SATURDAY AND SUNDAY), 1983

AT OCEAN GROVE MOTEL (AND MOTEL CARAVAN PARK)

64 WALLINGTON ROAD, OCEAN GROVE PH. (052) 551 255

(1.2 Km. from Post Office).

(Contact Marie Allender for motel information - Ph. 527 2749
Address - 19 Hawthorn Ave., Caulfield, 3161.

HOST CLUB - GEELONG

Secretary, Mrs. Valda Dedman,
69 North Valley Road, Highton, 3216. Ph. (052) 432 374.

A Bus will run to and from Melbourne

and Bed and Breakfast Only at Motel - Approximate Cost $50.00.

TWO EXCURSIONS ARE BEING PLANNED :-

1. TO OBSERVE THE ORANGE-BELLIED PARROT,

2. TO OBSERVE REGENERATION OF THE BUSHFIRE DEVASTATED AREAS.

A MEETING AND SOCIAL WILL BE HELD AT THE MOTEL ON SATURDAY

EVENING, OCTOBER 8TH - 7.30 p.m.

Honorary Secretary,
Dr. E.K. Turner,
13 Banool Ave.,
KEW, 3101.

Corrections etc. from last month!
Last line, p1. didn't print. It should read -
'...along the coastal belt, Vidtoria to Queensland.'

The same thing happened to the bottom of p5.
Comments should read -
'Comments help to make the report more interesting' and
'If you need more space, write on the back'.

From the Roadsides Conservation Committee:

FIRE PREVENTION GUIDLINES ASSUME GREATER SIGNIFICANCE

The Roadsides Conservation Committee's "Guidlines for Management of Roadsides having regard to both Conservation and Fire Prevention" have assumed greater significance in the afterm-th of the disasterous Ash Wednesday Fires.

At a time when municipalities are closely examining their fire prevention practices and posicies, the Guidlines provide a range of options to those responsible for the construction of firebreaks and other fire prevention works so that the method which is finally selected reflects the best compromise between the preservation of roadside vegetation and effective fire prevention works.

The Guidlines examine roadsides in the environmental context. Special attention is given to when a fire-break is most effective, who is responsible for fire-break construction, whether a firebreak is warrented, the effect of fire prevention works on native and introduced vegetation and the environmental effects of firebreaks on roadsides. Methods of firebreak construction are outlined and a checklist of questions for planning roadside firebreaks is given.

While the guidlines are not intended to be a definitive study of firebreak design, they do provide the information for those involved in fire prevention works to be under-taken.

The Guidlines have been distributed to all municipalities in Victoria and have met with an enthusiastic response. Many municipalities and government departments have requested aditional copies.

The Guidlines are available from-

Kerry Willis, Executive Officer, Roadsides Conservation Committee, c/- Ministry for Conservation, P.O. Box 41, East Melbourne 3002
Telephone (03) 651 4396 THURSDAYS

CLUB PROGRAM

MEETINGS

June Fri 10
Danita Brough, Canadian Rotary Exchange Student, "Some Aspects of Canada"
The venue is the High School, Lawson Pde.

Thurs 23
Committee, in the Ed. Centre.

July Fri 8
Bill Flentje, Bendigo, Bird slides and tapes.
High School.

Thurs28
Committee, Ed Centre.

August Fri 12
Prof. Turner

Thurs 25
Committee

September Fri9.

OUTINGS

June Sat 18 Epp alock, the Glaciated Pavement. Leave S.E.C. buildingsat 1.15 pm, to meet with the leader, Eric Wilkinson of Bendigo at 2 pm.

July Sat 9 Campbells Ck Water Wheel.
Leave S.E.C. building at 1.30pm

August Sat 13 Guildford birds and Mineral Springs. Leader Beris Perry.

September Excursion to 74n on the Maldon line! (74n is the L.C.C. map reference number)

October V.F.N.C.A. Springtime get-together of all clubs at Ocean Grove. details enclosed.
Sat and Sun 8 and 9.

NB.

* General meetings will now be held in the High School, Lawson Pde. Follow Myring St. into Blakeley Rd. and take the first turn to the right, following Lawson Pd. into the High School Bus loop and into the car park. Lights and signs will show you the way to Room 309.

Finance Bank $55-37 , Cash $21-10. Have you renewed your membership?

Committee		
President	Mr G. Broadway	72 2513
Hon Sec	Mrs S Bruton	72 3050
Treasurer	Mr F. Meyer	72 1958
Editor	Mrs R. Mills Articles for the Magazine may be left at Tonks Bros.	